

NEW JERSEY COLLEGES:



View of former mansion, now Shelton's administration building, from the formal garden.

A CAMPUS in the 'SKYLANDS'

Transplanted from Heart of Manhattan to Ramapo Mountain Retreat Once Owned by a Multi-Millionaire, Shelton College Offers Along with Higher Education Some of the Most Unusual Scenery to Be Found in State

By JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

LONG after the rest of New Jersey has luxuriated in the warmth of the early morning sun, Shelton College near Ringwood in the Ramapo Mountains remains shaded and cool—as if Mt. Defiance, looming off to the east, holds back the dawn for this newest New Jersey college.

Shelton's physical setting in many ways symbolizes the aspirations and problems of the young college. Certainly Shelton's future lies at the foot of a figurative Mt. Defiance, too, since the college is beset with problems created by the move of the institution in 1953 from the heart of New York City to the mountain fastness of North Jersey.

The problems are multifold. It cost money to move from an established location to buildings that needed extensive refurbishing. Student population dropped drastically, as might be expected in a shift from an urban site to a mountain location. Bereft of its long-time roots in New York, Shelton knows the shock of being transplanted in a completely new environment.

That's the debit side. To its credit, Shelton can show a remarkably beautiful campus—quite possibly the most handsome natural setting of any college in the state. Shelton occupies Skylands, the 1,150-acre estate planned by multi-millionaire Clarence

This is the 23rd in a series of articles which not only describe New Jersey's colleges and universities, but tell the story of the growth and traditions of individual colleges within the state, picture their roles in modern education and explain how they plan to meet what has been called "an impending tide of students."

Next Sunday: Centenary Junior College.



Outer stone of administration building, built in 1924 at a cost of \$1,250,000, was quarried on eastern section of estate and laid with weathered face out to give mansion a semblance of antiquity. RIGHT: Hillair House, which serves as main classroom building.





Noon chapel with Dr. John M. Murray, president, offering benediction and (right) the "Skylanders," a choral group, with Charles S. Wilkes conducting, rehearsing in faculty room. Heavy oak woodwork, mansion feature, is found throughout administration building.



McK. Lewis in the golden days of the 1920s. Skylands (and Shelton) stretches over miles of only slightly exploited mountain lands.

FEW persons know of Shelton College. For one thing, it is only 5 years old, with less than three of those years in New Jersey. For another thing, it lies well off the beaten track; not even the inveterate shunpike fanciers are likely ever to come up to the stone gate pillars of Skylands. Finally, Shelton is a Christian college—with "Christian" in this sense being a much more limited term than the generic word embracing all Christianity.

Everyone connected with Shelton College—trustees, faculty and students—believes every word of the Bible. This is fundamentalism, or, as administrators say at Shelton, this is the "historic" Christian faith. Those who believe are "saved," those who do not are "unsaved." It's as clear-cut as that.

This would seem to limit the student potential, and it does. Still, adhering to much the same rigid beliefs, Wheaton College in Illinois has become a nationally known institution with nearly 2,500 students. In its call for a return to fundamentalism and uncompromising belief in the Bible, Shelton is not far away from the doctrines of evangelist Billy Graham, although it "disagrees with the breadth of his cooperative policies." So the Shelton potential is not as minute as it first seems.

Right now Shelton College has about 165 students, down nearly 100 from the top enrollment in New York City. Dr. John W. Murray, elected president last November, wants to push this number to 300—by next September, if possible. Beyond that he isn't making firm plans, but he leaves no doubt that 300 is merely a starting point.

Indeed, Dr. Murray gives the distinct impression that soon, perhaps within a decade, Shelton College may be to New Jersey what his own alma mater, Wheaton College, is to Illinois. He looks for an expanded student body, a vigorous athletic program, a

revitalized building plan. He feels Shelton will be an important academic voice in the state.

IF YOUTH and personality and a high regard for public relations can help accomplish a college's growth, then 42-year-old Jack Murray is the right choice to lead Shelton in its wilderness. Dr. Murray has been for years a noted speaker at church youth rallies throughout the East, and as pastor of the big Church of the Open Door in Philadelphia he has a wide following.

Naturally Dr. Murray doesn't compromise one whit with Shelton's fundamentalistic beliefs, yet he recognizes that Shelton must broaden its academic appeal. Now nearly 90 per cent of the college's men or women graduates enter some religious field—the ministry, missionary work, church music work and so on. Dr. Murray wants to expand Shelton's preparation for such non-religious professions as teaching, law, medicine, science, nursing and many other areas of work.

Shelton College is a liberal arts col-

lege, accredited by the New Jersey State Board of Education, so its academic framework already permits training for professions other than those in strictly religious fields. This year for the first time a course in elementary education is being given, with Shelton students attending Paterson State Teachers College during their junior year.

Shelton's growth and influence can come as it moves away from pre-ministerial emphasis, Dr. Murray believes. The college is non-denominational, meaning that many Protestant sects are represented in the student body—but each student seems bound to be fundamental in his religious viewpoints. A non-believer could be admitted to the college, but it is clear he would be uncomfortable.

RIGHT now Shelton's advertising program is under way, pitched at the seven or eight newspapers and magazines supporting the "historic" Christian word. The text of the ads is sprightly, art work is colorful and both text and art reflect Dr. Murray's interest in youth and his knowledge of up-to-the-minute public relations practices.

The advertising features the expected very pretty girl, a bona fide practicing Christian who is a Shelton sophomore (Cathy Morehouse of Caldwell). The lively text calls attention to Shelton's academic program, to its full student life and above all to its marvelous campus.

Even ad writers would find it hard to paint the lily that is the Shelton campus. Clarence McK. Lewis founded Skylands soon after World War I, incorporating under his ownership hundreds of acres of wilderness that originally had been brought together for one of J. Pierpont Morgan's top aides. There in the Ramapos Lewis built Skylands mansion not as an exact copy of any particular English baronial homestead, but rather as a compilation of the best in many such British buildings.

Today the mansion serves as the Shelton administration building. Lewis built it in 1924 as a fabulous summer

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In richly decorated student lounge a discussion group gathers around fireplace. Huge mantelpiece is typical of British interior.

SHELTON COLLEGE

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retreat, at a cost of \$1,250,000. The outer stone was quarried from Pier-son Ridge above the Emerald Pools on the eastern edge of the estate. Each piece of stone was cut to exact specifications and the weathered edges faced out so the building would look like it had been in place for centuries.

INSIDE, the mansion is like a dream castle come true. Heavy oak wood-work runs throughout the building. Many of the passageways are deliberately low and narrow to give the illusion of a dark English interior. "Great halls" are found here and there, replete with huge fireplaces, high ceilings and leaded glass win-dows set off by expensive stained glass insets. Curved stone stairways lead to upper floors or downward to one-time wine cellars.

Impressive though the mansion is, the gardens are even more stupendous. Clarence Lewis prided himself on his love of the outdoors and his botanical knowledge—and he had the hundreds of thousands of dollars necessary to satisfy his landscaping whims and his craving for expensive flowers and shrubs.

Thus Skylands is a thing of rare charm at any season of the year, since Lewis planned the grounds to have color at all times, even if only the color of many varieties of evergreens in winter. Springtime starts a floral and shrub color parade that never ceases. One planting of flowering crabapples extends a third of a mile along "The Vista" east of the mansion. There are those who claim this sight in early May surpasses even the per-fection of the cherry trees in Wash-ington.

Clarence Lewis liked privacy. He heard in the early 1930s that a neigh-boring estate was to be sold to a boys' school. He bought it, then closed the mansion and other buildings for 18 years rather than be hemmed in, even though he spent only summers at Skylands—when school would have been out anyway. He stretched the boundaries of Skylands eastward un-til it included three distinct mountain ridges (starting with Mt. Defiance). In that land were streams and pools and ponds and lakes. In that land were hundreds of acres where man had seldom, if ever, stepped. Today all of this belongs to Shelton College.

Shelton couldn't resist the call of the wild when Skylands became avail-able three years ago at a very reason-able price. Undoubtedly the very thought of such a radical shift in Shelton's physical surroundings must have appalled many who knew in-timately the history of the old New York school.

DR. AND MRS. DON ODELL SHEL-TON pushed down the first roots of the college when they founded the National Bible Institute in New York in 1907. Seven years later National absorbed the Union Missionary Train-ing Institute, founded by Mrs. Lucy D. Osborn in Brooklyn in 1885. The



Castle-like construction of administration building is evident in stone stairway beside which Sherie MacKeen and David Ho chat with Howell E. Hammer,



faculty member, and the sturdy oak door about to be — opened by President Murray. Shelton is a liberal arts college accredited by state Board of Education.

Sheltons hoped their name "National" eventually would mean branches all over the country.

That wasn't to be, but the Institute acquired 10 three-story brownstone buildings on W. 55th St. in New York and laid plans for expansion. Down came five of the brownstones, up went one 11-story building—and up with it went a mortgage that pre-cluded further building. In 1928 the board of regents of the University of the State of New York authorized the granting of degrees in several relig-ious areas.

The Sheltons and those who as-sumed leadership after Don Shelton's death in 1941 recognized the limita-tions of a Bible Institute training. They looked to a broad liberal arts curriculum in the belief that "many groups in the constituency of the col-lege, though characterized by spiri-tual zeal, are too likely to neglect breadth of training." National Bible Institute became Shelton College in 1950, accredited by New York Re-gents to grant bachelor of arts de-grees.

Soon after, it became evident that a good price could be had for the W. 55th St. real estate if a new site could be found for the college. Skylands came to the attention of Shelton Col-lege and trustees decided to make the move. Shelton signed an option to buy the Ringwood estate and at the same time took an option from a buyer for the New York property.

SUDDENLY the New York buyer de-faulted, at a time when Shelton was well along in the process of convert-ing Skylands to college use. That blow, plus the huge costs of moving and remodeling and an unexpect-edly sharp drop in enrollment when classes started in New Jersey in Sep-tember 1953, brought the college per-ilously close to perishing.

Fortunately, however, the college

found every building at Skylands sound. Hillair House (the building Lewis had bought and closed for 18 years rather than have a neighbor) quickly became the main classroom building. The solid stone Hillair stables, long unused, became an ac-ceptable library. The solidly built sheep houses became a good men's dorm and the substantial dairy barn became a substantial science building. Other estate buildings supplied more dormitory space.

Shelton College has all kinds of room. Right now the buildings easily can hold 300 students without any-one feeling the least sensation of claustrophobia. The potential enroll-ment seems even greater than that, except for the fact that Shelton must consider itself as virtually a complete residential college. It is too far away from population centers to count on commuters.

Still, who, knows? Just over the mountains the Ford Co. has put its gigantic automobile assembly plant into full operation. Home develop-ments are certain to come to the area —perhaps in the mountains them-selves, perhaps near Lake Cupsaw or Lake Erskine in the valley down from the college.

SHELTON will be happy to aid in such development. "It's no secret that we have 1,000 acres of our campus up for sale," says Dr. Murray. There have been some good offers but the college wants to wait for what it con-siders exactly right. Sale of property at a substantial price to someone who will develop the land would have a two-fold advantage for Shelton: It would eliminate the financial troubles and it would greatly increase student potential.

Sale of 1,000 acres will by no means make Shelton crowded for space. Still remaining will be more than 150 acres of choice wooded campus, including

that part of Skylands where Lewis lavished such loving botanical care. Much of the land sold probably never will be occupied; it will take a stout-hearted builder of cliff dwellings to make houses stick to the sharp slope of Mt. Defiance.

Isolation, or at best semi-isolation, seems the continuing pattern of Shel-ton College. This worries Dr. Murray somewhat. "It's wonderful for the spiritual and academic development of our students to be off by them-selves," he explains, "but I think our faculty and staff should have much more opportunity for community life."

DR. MURRAY wants to make Shel-ton assume a larger role in its imme-diate surrounding area. Now the col-lege is often host to large youth rallies. Eventually, if Dr. Murray's athletic hopes are fulfilled, varsity football, basketball and baseball teams will also attract visitors to the Skylands campus. The president's in-terest in athletics comes readily—his son last fall was chosen most valuable football player at Abington High in Philadelphia.

This year the Shelton Warriors had a 21-game basketball schedule against a relatively modest slate of opposi-tion. The college women's team has played a schedule of games against several of the state's women's col-leges. Soon Dr. Murray hopes to build a gymnasium on the campus and to expand the athletic field for the pro-jected varsity football and baseball program.

Students at Shelton come from a wide geographical area, with only about one-third of the 165 undergrad-uates being from New Jersey. This low proportion of state students Dr. Murray hopes to raise and he expects to do it by making himself and the college as active as possible in New Jersey's collegiate program, from the



Stone stairway from one-time wine cellars leads Beverly Strube of Ridgewood to main floor of administration building while the solid stone Hilliar



stables, long unused, provided room for library and reading room shown above. Other estate buildings were converted into dormitories and science hall.

didn't err in questioning the financial setup. These things are being corrected; Shelton confidently expects accreditation next time around.

WHERE Shelton College goes from here depends in large measure on Dr. Murray. He knows it and trustees knew it when they chose him last fall to succeed long-time President J. Oliver Buswell. Dr. Murray wants to strengthen the academic program immediately, through added curricula and added faculty members, but he will leave much of that in the hands of an academic dean he is now in the process of choosing.

"Right now my job is public relations," says the new president. "We have a good sound academic college, we have a beautiful campus. I want to bring this to the attention of young people who share our ideals. We'll up-date Shelton within the bounds of our convictions."

"Skylands" is often in Dr. Murray's thoughts. He sees it as a good double purpose word, one on which to hang an advertising campaign. "Skylands, that's a good word," he says. "It's a theme in hymn books, a symbol in life. It means a peak or a summit or a living above, doesn't it? That's us. That's Shelton College."

standpoint of both administrative friendliness or cooperation and student intercollegiate activity.

Shelton's men and women willingly accept the college's avowed intention of "training Christian warriors for the 20th Century Reformation." They are serious, they are dedicated. They at no time minimize their complete accord with the college's stated aims. "We believe the Bible, cover to cover, word for word," student after student tells a visitor.

MOST students are anxious, nevertheless, that an observer not take away the impression that they have so dedicated themselves to academic or religious pursuits that they have no time for fun. "We're normal, happy young people," they declare—and they do wear the contented look that usually is on the face of someone who believes intensely in his theology or philosophy.

Shelton's undergraduate rules are clear and encompassing: "To abstain from worldly practices—such as the use of tobacco or liquor, attendance at theaters or participation in gambling games or dances." These restrictions on an ordinary campus might bring civil war; at Shelton they cause no difficulty whatsoever. The students "abstain from worldly practices" as readily as they eat or sleep.

Yet even such a visitor as one who is still indulging in worldly practices sees Shelton students to be much like those anywhere else. They laugh and sing and have dates and hold hands and choose a Valentine Queen and in general maintain a college spirit. They subject freshmen to the more-or-less traditional first year humiliations. They laugh themselves into good undergraduate happiness at the sight of frosh students who follow sophomore instructions to introduce themselves in the garden to "Ajax"

(a bust of the mythological Greek Agamemnon).

SHELTON juniors and seniors annually share a tradition that is unique among New Jersey colleges. Once a year, at a time of their own choosing, the senior class is permitted to vanish en masse off campus for a three-day weekend. This is "Senior Sneak" and in theory, if it's accomplished quietly enough, the juniors won't know the seniors have gone. However, if the juniors can trace the seniors within 12 hours, the seniors must stand treat for the weekend.

"Senior Sneak" keeps students agog throughout their last two years. Juniors plan a year in advance where they will sneak as seniors—all the while worrying where the present seniors will go. Everything academic stops when the words are shouted: "They've gone!" The seniors can go anywhere they choose. Last fall they chose the Poconos (but the juniors found them anyway).

Student activities naturally reflect the campus' religious emphasis. Many of the clubs have definite spiritual overtones and the singing group (the "Skylanders") make regular long tours to appear before various religious groups. Even the college newspaper and the yearbook leave little doubt of the religious tone of the college, while at the same time seeking to show that students can be both religious and gay.

Religious emphasis misled a committee of the Middle States Assn. of College and Secondary Schools in a recent evaluation, according to college administrators who discuss failure of Shelton to win accreditation. They recognize, nonetheless, the general fairness of the evaluators in declaring the college library was overweighted with religious works. They agree, too, that Middle States



In keeping with student custom, sophomore Cathy Morehouse of Caldwell "introduces" freshman Dick MacKeen to "Ajax," campus fixture.